

# Christianity and Crisis

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## Building the Great Community

THE eighth meeting of the U. S. National Commission for UNESCO has just ended. For the still uninitiated reader, UNESCO is the conventional alphabetical symbol for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. This meeting in Washington dramatized in striking fashion the interplay of political, intellectual and spiritual forces in this "time of troubles"—to use Toynbee's phrase.

A hundred men and women unofficially representing virtually every type of voluntary association for cooperative human effort, together with representatives of federal, state and local governments and the public at large, compose this national body. Out of its three days' deliberation concerning the making of peace in the minds of men, plus the briefing given by the State Department, the American delegation to the General Conference of UNESCO, meeting in Florence, Italy, during May, will acquire guidance for participation in the proceedings of the governing body of UNESCO. Fifty years hence it may be recorded that this effort to build the cultural foundations of peace was more significant than any corresponding political efforts in other agencies of the United Nations.

A typical sign of the contemporary preoccupation with the politics of peace, which is now inseparable from the cold war of diplomacy, is the fact that UNESCO's program of peaceful collaboration among the nations in the realm of mind and spirit should receive relatively little attention from the public. The churches have been slower than the secular agencies to discern the peace potential that inheres in voluntary collaboration among peoples. UNESCO's genius lies in promoting the free flow of ideas, reducing international and interracial tensions, and building world community. If there is any one spot in the entire network of international relations where the churches should feel at home, this is it.

For while UNESCO operates in a secular framework to which specifically religious interests and assumptions are marginal, this is even more true of the central organs of the United Nations to which

so many of our efforts have been addressed. The National Commission, which has counterparts in many of the nations affiliated with UNESCO, uniquely represents the American community as a whole. It embodies the American ethos. One cannot participate in its work without being impressed that in its own secular fashion it expresses the Christian ethic at a relatively high level of application. Are we not ready to acknowledge that the Christian apologetic in our time is more in the deed than in the word, that the only adequate vehicle of Christian testimony is something to be done? This has been the heart of missionary strategy in its most successful demonstrations. It has been beautifully exemplified in our time by the Friends Service Committee, whose every act is considered a bearer of the Quaker testimony.

To a discerning eye what the church encounters in the secular world is not always alien opposition. It is sometimes the church's own evangel stripped of what we regard as an ultimate necessary theological support, but nevertheless authentic in terms of moral imperative. Between the church and the world there is normally a two-way traffic, for some of the most dynamic efforts ever inspired by the Christian ethic have been initiated outside the walls of the church.

But participation by the churches in secular enterprises poses another problem. There is no sharp line between the political and the cultural, between the sphere of power politics and that of active good will. In the real world both are valid areas of action, but they must be clearly distinguished. Christianity is relevant to the former as well as to the latter. This was illustrated at the Washington meeting. Senator Benton, one of the principal architects of the National Commission, used with much effect some words of Reinhold Niebuhr concerning the impotence of an ethical romanticism that shuns political power as an unholy instrument. The Senator then proceeded to equate in essence, UNESCO's concern for human freedoms with the foreign policy of the American government.

The response was significant and instructive. The

initial reaction was one of enthusiastic endorsement, but as the hours passed a deepening concern was manifest. There was no slackening of support for the Senator's proposed "Marshall Plan of Ideas," elaborated in his speech on the Senate floor some weeks ago. But the conviction became increasingly articulate that the effort to build world community, with which UNESCO is primarily concerned, must not be identified with the effort, however honestly conceived, to prosecute the cold war by matching Soviet propaganda.

One suspects that if Mr. Niebuhr had been present he would have been quick to make application of an essential Christian insight: that however involved an individual or a group—or a nation—may inevitably become in a power struggle, everything that is done unilaterally lacks the ingredients of community. This is why separate instrumentalities, implementing different intentions, are necessary for self-defense and for the pursuit of common human ends. The pattern of behavior appropriate for a national spokesman in the Security Council is no more suited to a National Commission for UNESCO than a

denominational strategy is transferable to the World Council of Churches. We must have the "Voice of America," but it is bound to be an instrument of national policy, and all the world knows it. Like commercial advertising, be it ever so honest, it is still advertising. It is not the stuff that world community is made of.

To those who believe that biblical religion penetrates more deeply than any other the "ambiguities of human existence" it is a grievous fact that its insights are not brought to bear more effectually on the problem of building community among men and nations. The tragic spectacle which American politics presents at this moment is only the projection on a broad screen of elemental conflicts among men and interest groups that are unable to transcend themselves and their private concerns. At Lake Success the screen is still larger but the picture is the same. Politics can be redeemed only by a spirit that politics itself does not generate. It is the spirit of community, a flower that grows only in cultivated soil. Whatever else Christianity means, it means that men are brothers.—F. E. J.

## The Liberal Arts College and the Protestant Principle

W. BURNET EASTON, JR.\*

THE college, for all its tendencies to be an "ivory tower," can never become completely indifferent to the world in which it exists. Therefore, in a world as confused and disillusioned as ours, it is not surprising to find many thoughtful educators, both secular and Christian, dissatisfied with what we had thought was good liberal arts education. All over the country new curricula are being experimented with. This is a hopeful sign, and from the Christian point of view it is still more hopeful that many educators are now ready to admit that religion has a more important role to play in higher education than they would have dreamed of a few years ago.

Nevertheless, helpful as these experiments may be, for the most part they are not nearly as revolutionary or even experimental as is claimed. The tendency is to introduce a compulsory "core" curriculum, under a variety of titles, designed to give students a more rounded education in the humanities and avoid the obvious pitfalls of too much specialization. The current cliché is "General Education." Actually, however, when closely examined there is nothing very new in these new experiments. For

the most part they do not challenge the basic liberal arts philosophy of education and are merely a new intensification of the same old philosophy. They simply try to do the same thing we were trying to do a generation ago only do it better, chiefly by reducing electives and making compulsory broader courses in the humanities. There is reluctance among educators to face the revolutionary changes of our times and there is a reluctance on the part of colleges which call themselves Christian (and that is the group about which I am writing) to face what a truly Christian philosophy of education would do to a college curriculum. Most so-called Christian or church-related colleges tend to follow the educational bandwagon and then try to inject some religion somewhere into the program.

For example: Last June there was a conference on "Curriculum in General Education of the Church Related College." There was a lot of fanfare about how General Education allows more opportunity for a Christian approach (which may be true) and how General Education infused with Christian principle (never defined) and taught by Christian teachers would produce students integrated (the word was used *ad nauseum*) with their world. One got

\* W. Burnet Easton, Jr., is Professor of Religion at Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin.

the impression that at last the solution had been found to the problem of Christian Higher Education. When, however, the point was raised from the floor that according to Biblical Christianity the real Christian ought not to be completely integrated with his world, but rather ought always to be somewhat in conflict with his world there was an embarrassing silence. At last the chairman got up and said that that question had not been considered! Not for a moment do I question the sincerity of these men; I merely cite it as an example of how reluctant even Christian educators are to think through the implications of the Christian faith for education.

There are various reasons for this reluctance. Most college presidents are so harassed with endless administrative and budgetary problems they have little time to go really deeply into a philosophy of education, Christian or otherwise. Most faculties, even in self-styled Christian colleges, have enough teachers (frequently very good teachers, too) who, because they do not really understand Christianity, would fight adopting a completely Christian philosophy of education; and presidents have enough troubles with their faculties without wanting to stir up more. Then too, some administrators and faculties fear, not without reason in view of past history, that an all out Christian approach would lead to cramping a genuinely free inquiry. All of these factors enter into the picture but one suspects that behind them all is a more basic one, namely, that a really Christian higher education would be too revolutionary. But in our world just such a revolutionary approach is needed. If Christianity is the Truth which our world needs (and if we are Christians, we believe this) then the college which calls itself Christian has a holy obligation to teach that truth in its total program, regardless of how revolutionary it may be. Otherwise it ought to stop calling itself a Christian college.

## II

Dr. Arnold Nash, in a penetrating article\* points out that although the totalitarian criticisms of the Russians and the Nazis have false answers, they do have a correct analysis of the weaknesses of Western democratic universities, secular or Christian, and their liberal philosophy. Dr. Nash lists three basic criticisms which the Nazi and Marxist make and which are justified.

First, that our liberal arts education "believes that knowledge can be sought for its own sake," whereas "every institution concerned with the propagation of knowledge inevitably sets out to produce a particular kind of person." The Nazi and Marxist are simply more realistic and honest about this. Secondly, that the liberal arts college lays claim "to a completely false neutrality arising from an

inadequate understanding of the meaning of science and the scientific method." It "repeatedly fools itself by failure to realize that the scientific method and scientific knowledge can only be comprehended if they are seen as related to and embedded in a set of ideas that are 'transscientific.'" Thirdly, that our colleges "in (their) desire to be neutral about things that matter (have) tended to become simply fact-finding machines" and the Marxist and Nazi see the stupidity of such a procedure.

While there are of course some exceptions, in general each of these indictments is true of our liberal arts colleges, Christian and secular. And notwithstanding the new rash of curricula which go under various titles, "Great Books", "General Education", "Introduction to Humanities", etc., etc. (really the same old pill with a new coating) it is highly questionable if the students we are graduating in the post-war era have any greater sense of the world and their destiny in it than the students we graduated in the pre-war era. It is just that for the past few years it has been easier to find good paying jobs.

For instance, last summer a young man who had graduated from a large famous university (with a much publicized new educational program) and who had gone on to graduate school came to me completely bewildered. He said that the chief thing he had gotten from college was a sense of relativity and a "superior" sense of skepticism about everything. He was sick of his own skepticism but did not know where to turn. He told me that ninety per cent of the men he knew in graduate school were as confused and purposeless as he. The only thing they were sure of was that they did not want to go into business. They hoped they could get a job when they finished graduate school. Then, recently an honor graduate of the class of '48, who was unhappy in her job, reported to me that at Christmastime there had been an informal reunion of about twenty-five of her classmates. Not one of them claimed to be satisfied with what he or she was doing: all of them were discontented and apparently none of them had any idea what to do about it.

Illustrations like these could be multiplied. All of these students are the products of the post-war curricula which were supposed to remedy the mistakes of pre-war college education. The simple fact is that for the most part the so-called new curriculum is not really new; it is the same old basic liberal arts philosophy, intensified and dressed up with new labels and fancy titles.

## III

In spite of these criticisms of the liberal arts college, it must not be forgotten that the liberal arts philosophy has some genuine values which should not be discarded lightly nor unadvisedly. The emphasis on a broad background of humanities, which the new curricula do try to strengthen, is essential

\* The Totalitarian University and Christian Higher Education, *Theology Today*, October 1949.



if we are to be saved from the curse of under-educated experts. The emphasis on disciplined minds free to seek the Truth is a real good. (One of the difficulties of at least the small liberal arts college is that it is so dependent on enrollment to balance the budget that it dare not insist very rigorously on disciplined minds.) These are values which any good education must preserve. The question is How? How preserve them and at the same time produce students who are not just fact-finding machines and complete ethical relativists and who have a sense of meaning, purpose, and destiny in their lives.

For a long time I saw no solution to this problem except that of throwing over the whole liberal arts philosophy and establishing a genuinely Christian philosophy of education which I conceived as opposed to the liberal arts philosophy. Previously I insisted that Christian College make a complete break with the liberal arts approach.\* That still may be necessary, but I think now that there may be a point of synthesis between the Christian position, that is the Protestant Christian position, and the liberal arts position. At least I think it needs more serious consideration than I have seen in print or have heard discussed. It seems to me that Dr. Paul Tillich's interpretation of the Protestant Principle\*\* may offer the solution to this problem.

There is no intention here of making a complete exposition of Tillich's thought. My purpose in this article is simply to call the attention of Protestant educators and of churchmen who are concerned with education to Tillich's idea of the Protestant Principle, and to make some suggestions regarding its relation to a Christian liberal arts philosophy of education. At the most what is suggested here is only a beginning point for thinking and the whole subject needs much more thorough investigation.

As the informed are aware according to Tillich the Protestant Principle, which rests on the Christian Doctrine of Justification by Faith, is a universal and eternal principle, valid in all times and in all cultures. It is not just a temporary principle nor limited to one culture or era. It is the principle of protest against all idolatries whether in culture, in class, in nation, in church, or in education. But a protest, in order to be a valid protest, must be made from an eternally valid point of reference. In the Protestant Principle the protest is made with reference to the majesty of the Living God and to the criterion of the Kingdom of God. All human forms and constructions are recognized as less than the Kingdom of God and therefore when men idolize their constructions these idols must be protected against.

Now it seems to me that in a very real sense this is what liberal arts education at its best has aimed

at and missed. The liberal arts philosophy has claimed the right to challenge all theories, all dogmas, all ideas, but it has had no eternally valid point of reference. It has claimed that its point of reference was *The Truth*, but actually the academician's truth is an abstraction, or even more accurately, a will-o'-the-wisp which nobody discovers. Professor A has a truth which is opposed to Professor B's truth, and Professor C disagrees with both of them. The college tries to justify this disagreement on the grounds that it encourages inquiry and that it stimulates thinking. There is some truth in both these justifications, but is this the only way to encourage inquiry and stimulate thinking? The result of this procedure is that *The Truth* which the liberal arts college actually teaches its students is that there is no Truth. Then we are surprised when so many students graduate disillusioned, uncertain, and without purpose.

The weakness of the liberal arts principle is not that it challenges all forms, dogmas, and ideas (that is its strength) but rather it has no principles except anarchistic inquiry and an abstract truth nobody ever possesses. The Protestant Principle also challenges everything, indeed it more than challenges, it protests against *all* human idolatries, but it makes its protest in the name of the Living God revealed in Jesus Christ and of the Kingdom of God, which stand above and judge every human endeavor. It examines all cultures, ideologies, and institutions, including its own institution of the Church, from the perspective of the Kingdom of God and finds them all inadequate and in need of new thought and reshaping. Thus the Protestant Principle provides for all the freedom, stimulation, and growth which the liberal arts principle needs, but the Protestant Principle provides a positive basis for its criticisms and avoids the negative anarchy of the present liberal arts philosophy and practice.

The question of the relation of a Christian education to a liberal arts education is a very big question. But it is a very urgent question, which must be faced realistically by Christian educators. By and large the attempts of our liberal arts colleges, in spite of their new curricula, are failing because they have failed to examine their basic assumptions (a form of idolatry) in the light of the criticisms of the totalitarian educators. I am suggesting here that what Dr. Tillich calls the Protestant Principle meets these criticisms, offers a solution for preserving what is worth preserving in the liberal arts program and makes it positive rather than negative. Needless to say, to put this principle into practice at the level of the local college will take courage and no little risk. The Protestant Principle is far more revolutionary and dynamic than the liberal arts principle ever thought of being. But if the Christian colleges fail to take the risk they will forsake their calling and receive the just rewards of their apostacy.

\* Rethinking the Christian College, *Christian Century*, September 12, 1945.

\*\* *The Protestant Era*, University of Chicago Press.

# Can Peace Be "Made"?\*

AGNES VON ZAHN-HARNACK

WE are meeting here in memory of the September day in 1939 when the Second World War began. This meeting should lead us to serious self-examination, guided by relentless honesty and a desire to find the truth. We should begin our self-examination by trying to recall the feelings, which in those memorable September days stirred our nation as a whole and us as individuals.

While we were waiting breathlessly, the loud-speakers announced the march into Poland. I believe I am correct in saying that the prevailing emotion we felt when hearing those hollow and high-sounding phrases was fear. In our mind we saw all those dear to us drawn into this swirling fate: the sixteen-year-old and the sixty-year-old. But most of us sensed something more than that which threatened our personal fate. We saw Germany's decline and fall and we knew that a fall would precipitate half of Europe into an immense abyss. But close to our fear stood our *bad conscience*. What had we done to avert this disaster?

Our sins of omission were numerous. Beginning with the twenties, and continuing to this day, we felt the silent, and at the same time eloquent, accusations of those sinful omissions. They were manyfold: cowardice and shortsightedness, apathy, indifference, egotism and desire to escape suffering—a thousand large and small omissions and lost opportunities. How often have we not said: "Yes, in 1933 we should have . . .", or, "At the first unfriendly acts towards the Jews we should have . . .", or "As soon as the Black Storm Troops was formed we should have . . .",—but we did not! We remained silent and passive, we clenched our fists in our pockets, or perhaps we tried to put the matter off with some joke; now the bill for all these sins is presented. But the prevailing mold was fatalism—a fatalism related in a terrible way to cynicism. In those days we heard words proclaiming our terrible self-disdain, and our shocking loss of all dignity: "They can do whatever they like to us!" A nation using such words can scarcely sink lower.

There also was a class of Germans who looked toward the war, wantonly assured that the victory was ours and who fervently strove toward a politically powerful Germany; but they were a minority, much more insignificant than the high sounding proclamations and the loud applause led us to believe. Fear, bad conscience and cynical fatalism

reigned even in the highest circles, close to Hitler himself.

The beginning of the war seemed to justify the few who believed in a certain victory. The quick successes in Poland calmed the uneasy mind of some, lulled the bad conscience of others, and encouraged the lax and indolent fatalists. The feverish activity which the war demanded of each single person brought a sinister routine into our everyday lives, which, in the end, killed every individual and independent thought. We were close to accepting the war as an inevitable way of living.

Thus five and a half years went by. They brought a dazzling rise to power, brutal breaches of contract, suppression and annihilation of the wantonly occupied countries—but they also brought with them courage, proved a million times over, true sacrifices and endless acts of devotion; the German flag was planted deep in the Caucasus. Then the spiral spring turned back with irresistible force, across the German frontier, into the heart of our fatherland, which broke down, completely destroying all human, all personal, and all material values.

The second half of those fateful years followed: the years of the occupation. When the guns grew silent and no bombs fell, a timid hope arose in our midst. Life began to stir among the ruins, human beings met, looked for new ways of living or imagined that the old ways could be restored once more. Many a helping hand was offered us and was gratefully accepted. But our hopes were premature. We could not and should not get by as easily as naive optimists and clever businessmen fancied. The misery of which we were guilty was too great. The sacrifices which we had forced on the victors were too great, and even if *we* tried to forget everything as soon as possible, they did not forget! They may disagree again and again among themselves, but in some things they will agree for many years to come—in demanding reparations and securities from us. At the end of the war a lot of ability and willingness to work was to be found in Germany; but since then many dangerous and poisonous weeds have shot up. Hunger forced us to become materialists; the disappointment in the occupying forces caused unjustified bitterness; the fear of being drawn into the conflicts of those powerful forces led to the fateful error that only weapons could assure peace, and that in a future combat, Germany would take a fighting part and play a decisive role.

Such is the German balance of those years since 1939, and yet but one cry from our agonized nation is to be heard: PEACE! We are beginning to look for people who wish to work toward this peace; for institutions and organizations which could guarantee

\* We are publishing herewith an address delivered last fall by Dr. D. Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, the daughter of the famous German theologian, Adolf von Harnack, both because it is very revealing of the spiritual problem of Germany and because of its observation of the nature of peace. Her brother, Ernst von Harnack, a high official in the Prussian State administration, and a member of the Resistance Movement, was beheaded by the Nazis. The translation is by Miss Erika Strauss, Bonebrake Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio.

this peace; for international agreements which could abolish war. But regardless of this longing for peace, pacifism is not valued much in our nation and not very many believe in it. One may regret that; but behind this detached and skeptical attitude a grain of truth is to be found which should be considered.

The word pacifism is derived from the Latin *pacem facere*, "to make peace," and here our skepticism is understandable. The verb *facere*, "make," has mechanical, technical, and manual meanings. It is an unjustified assumption to believe that human beings could "make" some kind of peace; could set up institutions to produce peace as the result of their intelligence, their technical and diplomatic skill and experience. That is a fundamental error! Peace does not belong in the sphere of rationalism and technique, but belongs within the sphere of the transcendentalism of Spirit. For the meaning of peace, open the textbook of humanity—the Bible. There it is written: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering. . . ." (Gal. 5:22).

Thus peace is a fruit. The growth and ripening of fruit is removed from human arbitrariness and human technique and falls under divine laws. Saint Paul, a seer who can express the unexpressible, sees before his mental eye a tree laden with fruit. This fruitful and fertile tree is the Spirit. That is decisive. Peace is brought forth by the Spirit.

He who wants peace must nurse the Spirit, and he should set his whole life under the law of the Spirit. We Christians speak of the Holy Ghost, or, to say it more impressively, of the *spiritus creator*, "the creative spirit." We need not discuss here the dogmatic teachings concerning the Holy Trinity, the long and complicated history so difficult to understand for those living in present times. We mean the Spirit about which we read in the Gospel of St. John: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) Truth, then, means setting the Spirit above all other human values. Thus will the fruit grow on the tree of the Spirit and one after the other will fall into our hands.

Peace is not the first fruit to ripen—the first fruit is love. In times of need such as these, love is truly a divine and comforting glad tidings since it seems to have grown cold in many of us. Where the Spirit is worshiped, there love is living. Where we try to comprehend our fellow men in the true spirit, there we learn to understand and love them as a whole, regardless of their shortcomings. Where we free ourselves of possessive greed, there we cease to ask the impossible of our fellow men. We grant them space, we do them justice, and thereby the acrimonious bitterness vanishes which today still so often corrodes the link between people and nations. We Germans, as a fourfold vanquished people, are exposed to such bitterness. To fight day by day against this bitter feeling, by propagating the truth

and by exposing all attendant rumors and propaganda, should be the task of those who live in the true Spirit and who wish to harvest the fruit of love.

After love, it is joy that ripens. In a world which has become so lacking in true joys, this word has a promising sound. What kind of joy can we offer our youth and where can it be found? Wherever a small circle—in a family, in a neighborhood center, in a camp—meets in the true spirit, making music, reading poetry, exchanging ideas, there joy grows and ripens. Thus, nothing makes us happier, nothing seems more full of promise, than a gathering of young people from different nations who meet in this spirit of joy. For it is in these small community centers, together with love and joy, the fruit of peace slowly ripens. That is what the apostle meant when he spoke of peace as the third fruit of the Spirit. Where true mutual joy reigns, there discord cannot grow; mutual joy forms stronger ties than anything else, stronger ones even than mutual suffering.

But the apostle knows of another, a fourth fruit, the one which we Germans need more than any other nation: after the fruits of love, joy and peace, longsuffering ripens on the tree of the Spirit. This does not mean the patient endurance of a lamb or a sheep, the resignation resulting from apathy, weakness and tired fatalism which seem to bind us to earth and makes us rigid and uncompromising. True longsuffering should be a power, it should give us strength to master our fate, and make us able to accept our destiny with composure which is also the fruit of the true Spirit.

Nothing great and good can ripen in a short time. Everything worth striving for must grow slowly and gradually. As a nation we have lost the trust and confidence of the other nations; we shall gain it again only after a score of years. Neither can our former standard of living, even a modest standard—whatever that means—be attained in a short time. But untiringly our own spirit must watch the inner regeneration of our people, unwearingly and patiently we have to school ourselves and them to live in this Spirit. There is no other road toward peace.

We know the insinuation the devil, the evil spirit, is using to lead us from the right way; we have these three words constantly whispered into our ears, now sneeringly, then desperately, now scornfully, then full of challenge and incitement: "But the others?!" What are the others doing? What are they doing to us? Where is their love, joy and peace to be found? We should definitely refuse to listen to these whisperings. It is none of our business what the others are doing; we are not responsible for them.

We must travel the road which we have recognized to be the right one; maybe this knowledge is a blessing bestowed on the vanquished. We should



have no illusions as to the length of the road. Peace is not a goal which can be reached in a short time. A short road can be the wrong road, and a long road the right road! It will take centuries to traverse the road toward peace. Many generations will die on this road, perhaps some will be killed while travelling it. But the goal is there, and the signs leading toward it are clearly marked.

## Correspondence:

Dear Sir:

Entitling his editorial of March 20, "A Blow to Christian Unity," Henry P. Van Dusen laments that Judge Steinbrink, "a jurist, not himself a Christian and with meager ability to comprehend the most elemental ecclesiastical terminology (such as the familiar distinction between Christian unity and church union), should undertake to define the nature and law of Congregationalism against the judgment of the most authoritative spokesmen of that communion. . . ."

As one presumably able to grasp the familiar distinction mentioned, and as one who received in the court room quite a different impression as to the judge's mental powers, I offer certain comments on President Van Dusen's editorial.

First, why did Dr. Van Dusen himself directly disregard the familiar and important distinction which he charges the judge could hardly grasp? The editorial began with an assertion that "the advance of church union has received what may prove to be its most serious setback in this century. . . ." Dr. Van Dusen surely saw, as must everyone attentively reading the Preamble and first sentence of the "Basis of Union," that it was a plan of church union which was there blue-printed. Further, there can be no question but that it was a plan of church union which the court has enjoined. Then why is the editorial entitled "A Blow to Christian Unity"? Could it simply be that the title most derogatory to the judge and the judgment was used, without any genuine concern to keep clear the familiar distinction which he charges Judge Steinbrink with being hardly able to comprehend?

Second, the definition of Congregational polity written out in paragraph 7 of the court judgment, in the case of the Cadman Memorial Church against the General Council, is under vigorous attack by many critics, including Dr. Van Dusen. Does he realize, or do his readers know, that the judge's definition of polity is taken entire, every word and syllable, from the General Council's own statement of polity which they asked Judge Steinbrink to accept? All one needs to do is to place side by side paragraph V of the Defendant's Prayers for Relief, and paragraph VII of the judgment of the court. To do that is to see quickly a focal issue in this important court action.

After furnishing the definition of polity which Judge Steinbrink accepted and used, after dropping one word, the General Council asked him further to declare "that such polity is preserved to all Congregational Christian Churches in the provisions of the 'Basis of Union' and the 'Interpretations.'" Either because of "meager ability," or because of unusual ability in penetrating the "conglomeration of confusion and conflicting statements," and in seeing through the ambiguities and devious language masking the many proposed radical departures from congregationalism, Judge Steinbrink rejected the contention that the polity defined in his paragraph VII was to be preserved in the proposed

United Church. This judgment of fact, not any matter of elementary ecclesiastical terminology, was crucial for determining the outcome of the Cadman case. It may truthfully be added at this point that numerous promoter leaders held the same opinion as the judge on this matter. Some of them, in fact, favored the proposed church union because they themselves regard our congregational freedom as being "intolerable license," and because they saw in this proposed merger a brilliantly conceived method of securing an authoritative national organization to control hitherto independent churches.

Third, in asserting that this decision "casts doubt upon the participation of the Congregational Christian Churches in the Federal Council and World Council of Churches . . .," Dr. Van Dusen was, in my opinion, profoundly mistaken. The judgment against the General Council, in enjoining merger, certainly issues no injunction against co-operation. More than that, the decision of the court gives specific, emphatic approval and encouragement to cooperation. Further, the General Council is, by action of the churches bringing its constituent National Council into existence, specifically authorized as our agency for interdenominational co-operation.

If in becoming members of the Federal Council of Churches, the denominations, or the national organizations thereof, merged or united with the Federal Council, Dr. Van Dusen's contention would indeed be correct. But the undisputed fact is that both the Federal Council and the World Council are federative instruments, agencies of interdenominational cooperation, and quite aside from the Steinbrink judgment the very nature of the Federal Council precludes our General Council's being merged with it. It is commonly being forgotten that our General Council is a representative body, not generally clothed with the power and authority of the bodies comprising the General Council. Certainly the fact that the House of Representatives and the United States Senate, as representative bodies, cannot merge themselves does not bring into question the legality of their devising means of cooperation.

If the court judgment in question does in any way bring into question the legality of our denominational support of the great agencies of cooperative Protestantism, I am sure our Committee for Continuation of the Congregational Churches will be concerned equally with Dr. Van Dusen to have the present judgment amended or resettled. In fact the final provision ordered, adjudged and decreed by the court is that the plaintiffs may move to resettle this judgment.

(Professor) Marion J. Bradshaw  
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That part of Justice Steinbrink's decision regarding "the nature and law of Congregationalism" which my editorial questioned was not paragraph VII of the court judgment; Mr. Bradshaw might have noted that my editorial explicitly affirmed the substance of paragraph VII as "the basic principle of Congregationalism, by common acknowledgment," namely, "the absolute and inalienable authority of each individual congregation over the administration and control of its own affairs." The parts of the judge's decision which are most serious in their import and most questionable are his sweeping and categorical ruling that the General Council (and, by implication, any other Congregational body whatso-

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ever except a local congregation) "has no power or authority to merge or unite itself with . . . any other body or organization whatsoever"; and the decisions of various state courts which he cites in support of his decision as to the power of minorities, however small, to block the desire and will of majorities, however large. His decision runs directly counter not only to the judgment of the overwhelming bulk of the most authoritative interpreters of congregationalism, but also to the actual practice of national Congregational Church bodies which, through the past half century, have "united themselves" with other church bodies without their right to do so being challenged. These consummated mergers include the union of the Congregational Church and the Christian Church in 1931 to constitute the Congregational Christian Churches whose right to consummate a similar union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church is now denied.

Dr. Bradshaw does not think the participation of the Congregational Christian Churches in the Federal Council and other ecumenical bodies is imperilled. But the clear implication of the judge's decision would seem to be that no Congregational body, other than a local congregation, has power to take any action in behalf of the

denomination in relation to a non-congregational body, to which any individual local congregation objects. There is nothing in the basic documents of the church which Justice Steinbrink recognizes which permits the church to unite with other churches in a Federal Council and forbids it to unite with other churches in organic merger. Dr. Bradshaw approves of Congregational participation in the Federal Council. But this is no assurance that some local congregation may not disapprove of such participation and bring court action to prevent it. If it should do so, the precedent of the present decision would seem to offer good hope of its success. Exactly this view of the import of Justice Steinbrink's decision has been widely expressed, for example, by the editorial writer of *The Christian Century* (Feb. 8, 1950), himself no inconsiderable authority on congregational church polity.

As to Dr. Bradshaw's first point, any setback to a church union which represents the will of two great denominations is, *ipso facto*, a blow to the wider cause of Christian unity, all the more so when it may imperil the participation of one of those denominations in the organized expressions of Christian unity.—H.P.V.D.

## South Indians Reject Anglican Proposals

Relations between the Anglican Communion and the United Church of South India (including four former Anglican dioceses) have been complicated ever since the united church came into existence in 1947. In 1948, the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops from all over the world asked the united church for "clarification" on six points of order, including inter-church relationships and the status of the ministry.

In answer to a request from the Lambeth Conference to reconsider relations with other churches "not episcopally ordered," the United Church of South India flatly rejected breaking off relationships with other parent churches so that it could be more acceptable to the Anglican Communion.

"We are united in one church; our parent churches are divided. If it is now insisted that we state what our permanent relation with them is to be, we can only say that we can be content with nothing except that they should be united as we are. So long as they remain divided our position must remain anomalous from the point of view of any one of the divided churches. But from the point of view of the historic faith of the church we must surely judge that the real anomaly, the real scandal is that the church should be divided.

"We have promised at the end of thirty years to give equal weight to two principles: that our own ministry shall be one and that we shall maintain and extend full communion with our parent churches. As things stand, these two principles are irreconcilable. They can only be reconciled when the parent churches now divided are united. Our act of union is an act of faith in the Holy Spirit that he will bring this about. We cannot therefore say more than the Constitution has said about what our successors will do in circumstances which we pray may be profoundly different from those in which we now are."

—*Ecumenical Press Service, Geneva.*

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